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Culture of peace

International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/80.

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Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/80

Summary

The present report, prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), presents a succinct summary of the activities carried out during the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010, by UNESCO and other United Nations entities, Member States and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to promote and implement the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace as requested by the General Assembly in resolution 64/80. In addition, it provides an assessment of the progress achieved in implementing the objectives of the Decade, as well as recommendations for future action. The annex contains a summary report of the UNESCO High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, convened by the Director-General of UNESCO on 18 February 2010 to coincide with the launching of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010), which is closely linked to the Decade's objectives.

I. Introduction

1. In 2009, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) submitted its annual report (A/64/312) on its programmes and those of other United Nations entities with regard to their adherence to and implementation of the Programme of Action for the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010. In its resolution 64/80, the General Assembly commended UNESCO for recognizing the promotion of a culture of peace as an expression of its fundamental mandate, and encouraged it, as lead agency for the Decade, to strengthen further the activities it has undertaken for promoting a culture of peace. As 2010 marks the end of the Decade, the General Assembly requested that a summary report on the activities carried out over the past 10 years by UNESCO and other United Nations entities, Member States and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to promote and implement the Programme of Action be submitted to it at its sixty-fifth session.

II. Global review at the end of the Decade

2. Pursuant to resolution 64/80, UNESCO sent out a request for contributions concerning activities for the Decade, to which 18 Member States, 10 non-governmental organizations in operational relations with UNESCO and 4 United Nations bodies responded. The findings of this review are contained in the present report,[1] which provides (a) an overview of the activities that were carried out to implement the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace during the Decade; (b) an assessment of the progress achieved; and (c) recommendations for future action.

III. Overview of activities during the Decade

A. United Nations system

1. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

3. Throughout the Decade, UNESCO has been engaged in implementing activities relevant to the eight action areas of the Programme of Action. The mission statement of UNESCO as contained in its medium-term strategy (2008-2013), stipulates that UNESCO "contributes to the building of peace, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information". Accordingly, one of its overarching objectives is "fostering cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace". One of the 14 intersectoral strategic programme objectives is, specifically, "demonstrating the importance of exchange and dialogue among cultures to social cohesion and reconciliation in order to develop a culture of peace".

[1] All of the contributions received from the respondents that took part in the global review can be accessed on the culture of peace website at http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=37083&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

4. Closely related to the culture of peace is the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010), proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 62/90, for which UNESCO was given the role of lead agency within the United Nations system. To launch the Year, the Director-General convened a High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures on 18 February 2010. The panel, composed of eminent personalities from diverse geographical and intellectual backgrounds, focused its discussions on new approaches and avenues for action to promote intercultural dialogue and peace, which would contribute to the development of a draft programme of action for a culture of peace for 2012-2013 (see the annex to the present report for a summary of the Panel's debates). An extensive programme of initiatives to celebrate the International Year has also been developed by UNESCO member States and the international community at large[2]

Education

5. Within the framework of the recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation, peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms adopted by its General Conference in 1974, UNESCO fosters a culture of peace through education by supporting Member States to provide quality, inclusive education that promotes the values of peace, human rights, tolerance, intercultural understanding, democracy, non-violence and respect. In collaboration with relevant partners, UNESCO works to strengthen Member States' capacities to integrate the human rights-based approach throughout their education systems by transmitting knowledge and disseminating good practices.

6. Through its International Bureau of Education, UNESCO engages in multilateral and bilateral initiatives to revise or adapt curricula, textbooks and other learning materials, as well as teaching and learning processes, in order to remove embedded prejudice or stereotypes, enhance mutual understanding and equip learners with the skills to live with others in peace and tolerance. The organization also develops teaching and learning resources, manuals and guidelines on specific topics related to the development of a culture of peace, such as learning to live together, human rights and the rights of the child, peace and democracy, gender equality and the prevention of violence in schools. In partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the organization continues to implement the Plan of Action for the World Programme on Human Rights Education, in order to integrate human rights principles and values into both formal and non-formal educational settings.

7. Advocacy for peace, human rights and intercultural understanding, and Holocaust remembrance education are an integral part of the work of UNESCO. The organization uses every opportunity to promote its vision, including through high-level international and regional policy forums, taking full advantage of its category 1 and 2 institutes, as well as through its Associated Schools Project Network and the UNESCO Chairs and University Twinning and Networking programmes. Both the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development in New Delhi and the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding in Seoul are working to meet the peace education and sustainable development-related research and capacity-building needs of developing countries and countries in transition, with a focus on the Asian and Pacific region. UNESCO rewards

[2] For more information, see www.unesco.org/en/rapprochement-of-cultures/.

outstanding examples of activities designed to influence public opinion and to mobilize humankind in favour of peace through the biennial award of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education and the annual award of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize.

8. The 2011 Education for All Global Monitoring Report will focus on the impact of violent conflicts on education and on how education can promote peace, with the aim of identifying strategies to protect education and rebuild education systems in countries affected by conflicts and countries in post-conflict situations. This builds on the international leadership of UNESCO regarding education in emergencies, which was the subject of discussions at the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Doha in 2008, and of a thematic debate of the United Nations General Assembly, in March 2009. Through its programme of Education for Emergencies and Reconstruction, UNESCO promotes access to basic and vocational education in African countries affected by conflicts. Regional activities cover education for emergencies and reconstruction; refugee and returnee environmental education; peace education; civic education for peace and good governance; sport for peace; the promotion of a culture of peace at the grass-roots and civil society levels; and technical and vocational education for youth. In the Great Lakes region, UNESCO launched a project entitled "Conflict prevention and peace-building network for the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa" to strengthen a network of non-governmental organizations active in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution and of peacebuilding. In Western Africa, a flagship project entitled "Education for a culture of peace, human rights, citizenship, democracy, intercultural understanding and regional integration in countries in crisis and post-conflict situations" is being implemented to consolidate political and social stability in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Togo.

Sustainable development

9. During the biennium 2010-2011, UNESCO is focusing on accelerating progress towards the realization of the Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals, with a view to ensuring a more sustainable and peaceful future. As lead agency for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the culture of peace is being promoted through the integration of the principles, values and practices of sustainable development, including climate change education, into the design and development of inclusive educational policies and plans, teacher development policies, textbook and curriculum revision, and the renewal of pedagogical approaches and teaching materials. UNESCO is working closely with indigenous communities and organizations to bring their rich ancestral knowledge about nature into the debates on education and climate change, thereby fostering capacity to sustain all forms of life on Earth.

10. UNESCO seeks to enhance sustainable and social development by working to promote culture and science for development. It has developed a new cultural policy framework to orient policymakers and planners towards comprehensive and innovative ways of addressing challenges to cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue related to creativity and identity. A number of analytical programming tools, such as the "cultural diversity programming lens", have also been produced to help planners mainstream principles and knowledge regarding cultural diversity into their programmes and strategies for sustainable development and peace. Those tools are increasingly being used in United Nations country programming processes.

UNESCO has a strong record of promoting culturally sensitive approaches to HIV and AIDS prevention and care which render development programmes more effective and combat discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. UNESCO is also working to provide access to development opportunities offered by cultural and creative industries.

Science and natural resources management

11. In the area of science and natural resources management, the International Hydrological Programme has been working on water conflict resolution through the "From potential conflict to cooperation potential: water for peace" project, which provides decision makers and other stakeholders with the knowledge and tools to manage shared water resources. A landmark event was the setting up of the Synchrotron Light for Experimental Science and its Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) centre in Jordan. The centre offers opportunities for training and research in basic and applied sciences, technology and medicine and is well suited to fostering solidarity and thus contributing to peace through regional cooperation in science.

12. UNESCO is also advocating for investment in science, innovation and new technologies, including green technologies, to stimulate economic growth and peaceful development, while contributing to a sustainable environment and as a means of assisting developing countries in investing their way out of the financial crisis. It is working with a number of Member States, particularly in Africa, to develop scientific policies and to build human and institutional capacities to promote innovation and strengthen national research systems.

Human Rights

13. Action to promote respect for human rights is being supported through policy-oriented research on obstacles and challenges to the enjoyment of those human rights that fall within the areas of competence of UNESCO. Support is being given to advancing academic reflection on the normative content of those rights and on States' obligations to respect, protect and fulfil them, and to linking that reflection to policymaking through elaborating recommendations for concrete measures to implement those rights.

Equality between men and women

14. UNESCO is giving priority to the pursuit of gender equality through action in all of its fields of competence, as equality between men and women is one of the two global priorities of the organization in the medium-term strategy for 2008-2013. A practical and results-based Priority Gender Equality Action Plan for 2008-2013, endorsed by the Executive Board of UNESCO, describes the action that the organization's programme sectors will take between 2008 and 2013 to contribute to the pursuit of the empowerment of women and gender equality. UNESCO is also part of the wider United Nations system effort to help stop violence against women, and assisted in the preparation of the United Nations system statement against female genital mutilation, which it also signed.

15. The International Network of Women Philosophers was launched in 2007 to promote philosophical dialogue. Its emphasis is on the contribution of philosophy, particularly of women philosophers, to the promotion of a culture of peace, new

social policies, conflict prevention and the struggle against all forms of violence. UNESCO also helped to establish the Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Centre in Ramallah and is assisting in the establishment of a category 2 research and documentation centre on women for the Great Lakes region, headquartered in Kinshasa.

Democratic participation

16. UNESCO is working to foster democratic participation by providing support for the introduction of legislation relating to the media that is conducive the freedom and independence of the media, and support for the training of journalists and media professionals in non-partisan and independent reporting techniques, especially in conflict and post-conflict areas, as well as by assisting the media in covering elections. UNESCO also fosters research, capacity-building and dialogue on democracy through the activities of the International Centre for Human Sciences in Byblos, Lebanon, and the Permanent Forum of Arab-African Dialogue on Democracy and Human Rights.

Understanding, tolerance and solidarity

17. UNESCO also seeks to advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity through its efforts to promote a dialogue among civilizations and cultures by action in all its areas of competence, in accordance with the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 56/6, as well as with directions set by the decision-making organs of UNESCO. Work to that end is being undertaken, in the framework of a multi-stakeholder approach, with a variety of partners, such as the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Council of Europe, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Alliance of Civilizations.

18. A particularly compelling example of fostering peaceful engagement and mutual understanding is the series of high-level regional annual summit meetings that UNESCO has helped to organize with State leaders from countries of South-Eastern Europe, a region torn apart by civil strife and war not so very long ago. Those summits seek to promote a culture of peace by providing a platform for dialogue and regional cooperation. To date, seven annual summits of the region's Heads of State have been organized, in Ohrid (2003), Tirana (2004), Varna, Bulgaria (2005), Opatija, Croatia (2006), Bucharest (2007), Athens (2008), Cetinje (2009) and Istanbul (2010). They have resulted in concrete measures for regional cooperation.

19. To further promote dialogue in all of its areas of competence, UNESCO established an intersectoral platform on "Contributing to the dialogue among civilizations and cultures and a culture of peace", which pursues the following major objectives in relation to the UNESCO History Project: the development of intercultural skills, the engagement of new voices in interfaith dialogue, and the role of the media in fostering dialogue and mutual understanding.

20. UNESCO promotes understanding of tolerance and non-violence through the annual award of the Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence. It deepens knowledge of various forms of racism, discrimination,

xenophobia and intolerance through the implementation of the organization's Integrated Strategy to Combat Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the formulation of appropriate national policies and plans of action, as well as through the dissemination of good practices.

Communication and information

21. UNESCO provides support to Member States in strengthening the role of communication and information in fostering mutual understanding, peace and reconciliation, especially in post-conflict situations. Efforts are focused on enabling the media to provide unbiased information, avoid stereotypes and counteract incitement to hatred and violence, especially in the framework of the Power of Peace Network, which is aimed at harnessing the power of new technologies to increase mutual understanding.

22. Against the background of the current multiple global crises, the need to promote shared values, solidarity and humanism has become ever more important. In accordance with 35 C/Resolution 46 adopted by the General Conference, UNESCO resolved to take the pioneering and ever-pertinent message of Tagore, Neruda and Césaire as the starting point for engaging in substantial reflection and renewed action on a universal reconciled with diversity in keeping with the intellectual watch mandate of UNESCO within the United Nations system.

23. UNESCO is supporting participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge by: raising awareness about the importance of freedom of information and the press for development, democracy and dialogue; supporting Member States in the development of free, independent and pluralistic media, including through institutional capacity-building; formulating national information policy frameworks; facilitating community access to information, including through community multimedia centres, to increase learning opportunities and participation in development; supporting the preservation and dissemination of analogue and digital documentary information; monitoring developments and fostering the exchange of best practices with regard to the ethical dimensions of the information society; fostering international partnerships for enhancing universal access to information; and encouraging the development of knowledge societies.

International peace and security

24. UNESCO is working to promote international peace and security through its efforts to assist countries in post-conflict and post-disaster situations. A dedicated platform was established to assist countries in those situations to reconstruct their education systems, with the ultimate goal of achieving education for all; to provide policy advice and expertise on resolving conflicts that may arise over natural resources; to revitalize in-country research facilities; to integrate disaster prevention and mitigation efforts, particularly early-warning systems, into post-conflict and disaster responses; and to protect and rehabilitate damaged cultural and natural heritage.

25. Special assistance is provided for the implementation of efficient mechanisms aimed at decreasing conflicts and contributing to the development of a culture of peace in Africa. At the national level, UNESCO is promoting bilateral cooperation in line with priorities established by Governments. It is also monitoring the action taken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, the Sudan, and the

countries of the Great Lakes region to promote the peacebuilding process through dedicated task forces established for that purpose. A special programme of overall post-conflict support in the fields of competence of UNESCO was launched for Côte d'Ivoire in 2008 and antenna offices have also been established in countries with specific needs — Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Sudan. At the regional and subregional levels, UNESCO is providing support to the African Union (AU) and to regional organizations' initiatives, in line with the AU framework of action for post-conflict reconstruction and development, and as part of the Regional Coordination Mechanism of United Nations agencies working in Africa, as well as through the UNESCO Programme of Education for Emergencies and Reconstruction.

Youth

26. UNESCO is promoting a culture of peace and non-violence among youth through initiatives aimed at preventing youth violence by fostering the social integration and empowerment of young people. In 2008, UNESCO organized a meeting in Bahrain entitled "Youth@the crossroads — a future without violent radicalization", which was devoted to identifying and showcasing community-based projects and best practices that constructively engage youth and demonstrate capacity to foster an atmosphere that provides young people with positive options for their own future and that dissuades them from engaging in violent, radical behaviour. Projects have been implemented in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to identify the root causes of violence among youth and the best approaches to address them, as well as to create opportunities for the social integration of youth. A handbook entitled "Guidelines for the development of policies for preventing violence affecting youth" is being developed to assist policymakers in Central America to address that issue. UNESCO is implementing a similar initiative in the Great Lakes region in Africa, where research is currently being conducted to identify the causes of violence among youth and to provide concrete policy options for empowering youth as a means of preventing violence. UNESCO will organize a high-level meeting on youth development and violence prevention in the Great Lakes region in 2010, based on the experience gained in Central America, which will also promote South-South cooperation.

Sport

27. The practice of sport is a recognized pillar in promoting peace. The UNESCO programme on traditional sports and games promotes peace among different populations by encouraging dialogue and understanding among diverse cultures. UNESCO supports several sports initiatives, such as the partnership with Diambars in Senegal, South Africa and other African countries, which uses football and physical education as a means to involve out-of-school children and young people in formal education or learning processes. The initiative "Youth voices against racism", a partnership between UNESCO and FC Barcelona signed in 2007, also allows young people to play an active role in the fight against racism and violence in sport by involving them in local policymaking and in the design of local initiatives.

Common country programming

28. UNESCO is advancing a culture of peace through its participation in common country programming processes, notably the development of the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, which feature a human rights-based approach and gender equality as key programming principles. In the context of the Development Assistance Frameworks, UNESCO aims to bring thematic components of a culture of peace to bear on national development priorities and goals, and to advance internationally agreed norms and standards in pursuit of a culture of peace.

2. Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations

29. To combat challenges facing Palestinian youth, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched a junior farmer field and life schools programme in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 2008. It takes an innovative approach to empowering youth through raising self-esteem and teaching life skills. Using the agricultural growing calendar as a model for life, young people learn agricultural skills and corresponding life lessons, such as setting goals, the importance of personal space for growth, and teamwork.

30. FAO continues to cooperate with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Youth and Sport to promote the idea of junior farmer field and life schools throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, since the benefits of the programme for young people's self-esteem, entrepreneurial and agricultural skills, and overall potential to become healthy and positive young adults are evident from pre- and post-programme evaluations.

3. United Nations Children's Fund

31. A key activity promoting a culture of peace and non-violence is the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, which provides a detailed global picture of the nature, extent and causes of violence against children, and makes clear recommendations for preventing and limiting such violence.

32. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), together with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, co-chairs the Steering Committee on Monitoring and Reporting of Grave Violations against Children. The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave violations against children in armed conflicts, established in 2005 with the adoption of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), monitors six categories of violations, and is being implemented in 14 countries.

33. UNICEF supports follow-up to the 2007 Paris Commitments and Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups, particularly implementation of the Paris Commitments and Principles enabling the exchange of information on lessons learned; the prevention of child recruitment; and support for reintegration programmes, including monitoring and reporting on compliance by parties to armed conflict. In 2009, armed forces and armed groups in a number of countries released over 5,000 children. There was significant progress in Burundi, with the release of the remaining children associated with the National Liberation Forces. The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo released children in the Democratic Republic of

the Congo, and forces in the Central African Republic, in North and South Sudan and in Sri Lanka set free militarized children. Programmes supporting the reintegration of armed children and other children affected by conflicts continue to be implemented. Among other positive recent developments are plans for the release of children associated with armed forces in Nepal, in the Philippines and in South Sudan.

34. The approach of UNICEF to the reduction of armed violence is underpinned by an awareness of the numerous social, economic and political causes of armed violence. In 2010, UNICEF finalized its participation in a joint Armed Violence Prevention Programme with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UN-Habitat and the World Health Organization (WHO). The initiative promotes common policy guidance, strategies, effective partnerships and programmes for the prevention of armed violence at the global and local levels. The first inter-agency mission of the initiative was to Kenya, to assist the United Nations country team in developing a comprehensive multisectoral programme for the reduction of armed violence. UNICEF also collaborated with Governments in initiating interventions for the reduction of armed violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica and Thailand.

35. UNICEF contributed to the global dialogue on the causes and effects of armed violence, bringing the perspective of children to key policy and political documents, including the Secretary-General's report on armed violence and development and the Secretary-General's report on disarmament and development. The work of UNICEF informs other global initiatives, such as the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, the forthcoming General Assembly resolution on armed violence, the recent launching of the Oslo Commitments on Armed Violence and the Millennium Development Goals, which will mobilize political commitment to the reduction of armed violence and programming to that end at the country level. UNICEF also contributed to the development of international small arms control standards, which will be finalized in 2010.

36. UNICEF promotes mine action and mine risk education projects in some 20 conflict-affected countries to strengthen national capacity to deal with landmines and explosive remnants of war that pose a direct threat to the well-being of children and their families. Results at the country level included the introduction of mine/explosive remnants of war risk education in schools, the development of injury surveillance systems, and policy support and advocacy for the rights of victims of landmines/explosive remnants of war and other persons with disabilities, with a focus on children. At the global level, UNICEF advocates for the implementation of and universal adherence to the Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other legal instruments.

37. UNICEF played a lead role in providing research, documentation and analysis on children's involvement and children's roles in truth-seeking, accountability and reconciliation processes in contexts of armed conflict and political violence. The book, *Children and Transitional Justice: Truth-telling, Accountability and Reconciliation*, co-authored by UNICEF and the Human Rights Program at Harvard Law School and published in 2010, explores questions raised when children's issues, and children themselves, are prioritized in justice, and truth-seeking and

reconciliation processes. Key principles on children and transitional justice were also developed to build consensus and better inform the protection and participation of children in truth, justice and reconciliation processes.

38. UNICEF is engaged in activities to support parliamentarians in promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, including the preparation of two *Handbooks for Parliamentarians*: (i) *Eliminating Violence against Children*, and (ii) *Combating Child Trafficking*.

39. UNICEF played a key role in the development of the "Guidelines for the alternative care of children", which seek to ensure, on the one hand, that children do not find themselves in out-of-home care unnecessarily and on the other, that out-of-home care provided meets the quality that corresponds to the rights and specific needs of the child concerned.

40. The efforts of UNICEF to support more resilient education systems and to generate or restore national ownership in post-crisis recovery include the promotion of peace through innovative means. In Nepal, UNICEF has prioritized the protection of education from attack and the strengthening of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. This includes the Schools as Zones of Peace initiative through which, nearly 500 schools were directly supported. In the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, the teacher mobility scheme, despite the conflict, provided transport facilities for female teachers in remote tribal areas, enabling 30,000 girls to continue their schooling.

41. UNICEF promotes child-sensitive social protection. A recent joint statement on advancing child-sensitive social protection brought together UNICEF, the United Kingdom Department for International Development, HelpAge International, Hope and Homes for Children, the Institute of Development Studies, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Overseas Development Institute, Save the Children UK, UNDP and the World Bank in outlining vulnerabilities that children and families face, and the principles and approaches for undertaking child-sensitive social protection that can have a positive impact on children. The statement gives priority to strengthening families' resiliency and capacity to continue to care for their children.

42. UNICEF works closely with the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Over 30 per cent of the 70-plus programmes of the UNICEF that address child labour involve joint programming and/or joint assessments to promote programme and United Nations coherence. UNICEF, ILO and the World Bank have undertaken joint research on child labour which has identified rising child labour rates in Africa. Other findings include the significant threat to progress relating to child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean posed by the global recession. In India, increased access of children to school significantly reduced rural child labour rates, while increased household income had the largest impact on reducing urban child labour rates. In 2009, inter-agency collaboration on child labour has encouraged increased joint research, programming and innovative policy development. This includes increased collaboration on and technical input into the development of a new international instrument on domestic labour, which was on the agenda of the International Labour Conference in June 2010.

43. UNICEF provided technical advice to a large number of corporate partners on rethinking sourcing, supply chains and investment patterns, particularly in the area of agricultural child labour, which accounts for 69 per cent of all child labour. Collaboration with the private sector also assisted in preventing the sexual exploitation of children in the travel and tourism industries. Support for the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism was manifested at the global and country levels, particularly in Latin America, Asia and, increasingly, Africa. Thirty-three additional companies adhered to the Code and committed themselves to preventing the use of their facilities and services for the sexual exploitation of children. As of December 2009, 951 companies in 35 countries had signed the Code.

44. Collaboration with the private sector has also been strengthened to protect children from violence in sports. The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre initiated work in 2008 that led to the formation of a UNICEF internal steering group for the development of standards of care for international corporate sports partnerships. UNICEF provided technical guidance in the design of protective systems for children, as outlined in the updated Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) regulations on children: addressing recruitment and vulnerability/risk pattern analysis on the ground, management systems, protection and care of minors at club level, and improving regulatory frameworks for monitoring and enforcement mechanisms in sporting bodies and government.

45. The human rights approach informs UNICEF programme development, advocacy efforts and policy development. UNICEF is guided by the principles of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in its efforts to influence public policies, prioritize children's needs and develop and assist programmes benefiting children. UNICEF also monitors the status of children's rights and reports on progress in that regard.

46. Birth registration establishes a child's legal identity, which is essential in safeguarding his or her right to protection and assistance. UNICEF supports birth registration activities in about 80 countries, addressing obstacles such as lack of access to vulnerable populations in remote and rural areas and the prohibitive distance and costs for parents to travel to civil registration offices. UNICEF continues to raise awareness of the importance of birth registration; to support legal reform and the drafting of national policies; to build the capacity of Government officials and community leaders; to facilitate data collection; and to promote innovative methods of birth registration, such as the use of mobile telephones and computerized registration methods.

47. Gender equality is a cross-cutting theme that runs through UNICEF programmes. Essential to the UNICEF approach to gender equality is promoting social change through community-level engagement. Key activities include:

- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)-UNICEF joint programme on accelerating the abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting through advocacy, legal reform, civil society engagement and human rights education. The programme is supporting efforts in 12 countries and has contributed to major declarations of abandonment of female genital mutilation/cutting and child marriage.

- In all regions, UNICEF has increased its support for the application of the social norms perspective to violence against children, also highlighting gender dynamics in designing programme responses. A number of countries have undertaken research on child-rearing practices and corporal punishment of children in homes and schools. Some countries have supported social awareness and mobilization programmes to change attitudes and behaviour and promote non-violent, alternative ways of discipline. In Europe, half of the Government ministers have signed the Council of Europe campaign "Raise your hand against smacking", which advocates the prohibition of corporal punishment in all member States. National campaigns have been launched in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. In Barbados, support of corporal punishment in schools fell from 69 per cent in 2004 to 54 per cent in 2009, according to an opinion poll.

- UNICEF is focusing on the prevention of sexual violence against children. In September, UNICEF together with four United Nations organizations — WHO, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNFPA and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS — the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and, from the private sector, the Nduna Foundation and Grupo ABC, established a groundbreaking global initiative to address sexual violence against girls. It supports the undertaking of national population-based studies on sexual violence in various countries and the development of programmes that prevent and respond to sexual violence through strengthening formal and informal child protection systems, while addressing social norms that perpetuate gender stereotyping and discrimination, in line with the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy.

4. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

48. Since the establishment of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) 60 years ago, its Education Programme, with the technical support of UNESCO, has provided Palestine refugee children and youth with essential general, vocational and technical education, assisting tens of thousands of pupils and students in becoming educated and self-dependent. This has greatly contributed to the social and economic development of the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, where UNRWA operates, thereby helping maintain stability in a volatile and conflict-affected region. Teacher education has also been a key component of the work of UNRWA.

49. Equally significant, the Agency's education programme has contributed to the preservation of the cultural identity of a displaced and dispersed people and also encouraged positive values, attitudes and ways of life that reject violence and promote tolerance and the search for dialogue. There are currently close to half a million children in UNRWA's schools in its five areas of operation. Various activities, both curricular and co-curricular, have been fostering a culture of peace, as envisaged in the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

5. Peacebuilding Support Office of the United Nations Secretariat

50. The Peacebuilding Support Office, through the Peacebuilding Fund, aims to bridge the crucial phase after the signing of peace agreements and the start of

international reconstruction and development efforts, at a time when other funding mechanisms may not yet be available. In doing so, it works to advance the implementation of peace agreements, support national processes of reconciliation and conflict resolution, generate immediate peace dividends and enhance the capacity of Government institutes.

51. One of the thematic areas covered by the Fund is that of advancing processes of reconciliation and conflict prevention. Supporting peace education activities is a central part of efforts in that area. Currently, the Peacebuilding Fund funds six UNESCO-run projects in five countries, four projects of which focus specifically on peace education.

52. Peacebuilding Fund efforts to support actions that promote respect for human rights in countries in post-conflict situations include providing support to human rights commissions, awareness-raising activities on human rights and the provision of legal assistance. For example, in Sierra Leone, a $1.5 million project enabled the Human Rights Commission to strengthen national mechanisms for addressing discrimination against women.

53. The Peacebuilding Fund has paid increasing attention to the funding of projects that aim to advance gender equality in post-conflict settings. The introduction of a gender marker in the 2009 revised Peacebuilding Fund guidelines has enabled the Fund to better track gender-related allocations. The Peacebuilding Support Office is also working to develop a list of indicators to track the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and is leading, in cooperation with the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the drafting and consultation process for the report of the Secretary-General on women's participation in peacebuilding.

54. Through funding psychological and health support, social-economic rehabilitation, leadership training and strengthening the capacity of local institutions, including special prosecution units, the Peacebuilding Fund has contributed to reinforcing the role of women in seven conflict-affected countries. In Liberia, the Fund supported the establishment of the country's first-ever unit for prosecuting crimes of sexual and gender-based violence, and in Burundi, supported 900 microprojects of women's associations, which benefited at least 1,500 women.

55. Fighting corruption is often identified as a critical issue in post-conflict settings. In Sierra Leone, Peacebuilding Fund support has strengthened the secretariat of the National Anti-Corruption Commission. A national strategy on social responsibility was designed and advocacy undertaken with the Sierra Leonean public through television, radio and the printed media. In Burundi the Fund supported the establishment of four new anti-corruption regional brigades and funded a $3 million project through which a basis for dialogue was established between key partners in a democratic process leading to the setting up of a permanent forum for dialogue among 38 political parties, including rebel groups. That project increased dialogue between actors and contributed to unblocking the discussion in Parliament about the electoral law, which was eventually passed and contributed to the effective functioning of the National Independent Electoral Commission.

B. National level

56. Eighteen Member States, representing all regions, provided contributions to the present report. Many of those contributions also included information from national civil society organizations. One Member State noted that the eight action areas in the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace had already been covered in its national legislation well before 2001 and that the Decade had triggered few major new initiatives. A consolidated analysis of the main areas of action as reported by the respondents is provided in sections 1 to 8 below.

1. Action to foster a culture of peace through education

57. National education legislation, policies and plans were adopted to integrate the essential knowledge, skills and values inherent in building a culture of peace into primary and secondary school curricula. This included education for peace and non-violence, environmental education, citizenship education, values education, anti-drug education, human rights education, education for cultural understanding, sex education and HIV/AIDS education. Teaching materials, educational manuals and other special resources were developed on those topics and made widely available on the Internet. Capacity-building and training were provided for educators, members of the media and youth on conflict mediation, peace and non-violence, human rights, democracy, and drug addiction prevention. Numerous projects were carried out by UNESCO national commissions, UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network schools and UNESCO clubs on issues related to a culture of peace, such as citizenship education, respect for human rights and peace education.

58. Initiatives to promote a culture of peace by institutions of higher education in various parts of the world were expanded through the United Nations University, the University for Peace and the UNESCO University Twinning and Networking and Chairs programmes. Specialized institutes were also established, which provided expert training in non-violent conflict management and resolution and peacebuilding. Fellowships were also granted for university students to attend specialized university courses on peacebuilding.

2. Action to promote sustainable economic and social development

59. To alleviate poverty and its impact, poverty reduction strategies were adopted to link and harmonize anti-poverty reduction initiatives, provide opportunities for people to have sustainable livelihoods through the expansion of employment opportunities, improve access to social investment and monitor progress in reducing poverty. Policies, programmes and frameworks were also developed to reduce social and economic disparities, address external debt and debt-servicing problems, and promote sustainable development initiatives.

3. Action to promote respect for human rights

60. National legislation, policies and programmes were developed to comply with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to combat sexual violence and the exploitation of children and youth. Networks of non-governmental and civil society organizations were established to strengthen efforts to promote human rights, and children's rights in particular. Mechanisms were also developed

to monitor and promote the rights of children and youth. Ombudsmen were elected in countries to enhance the protection of the basic rights and freedoms of people.

4. Action to ensure equality between men and women

61. Action to promote gender equality in education focused on:

- Mainstreaming gender equality in the curriculum at all levels of education
- Revising policies to improve the retention of girls in the school system
- Mainstreaming the issue of child labour in education, raising public awareness concerning child labour and strengthening existing outreach programmes
- Developing policies to reach disadvantaged or marginalized children
- Providing free primary education
- Providing transportation for disabled children
- Providing social support programmes for vulnerable children, children from poor socio-economic backgrounds and children with disabilities
- Increasing the participation of female students in technical and vocational education and training
- Developing programmes to track and re-admit into the education system learners who had dropped out of school

62. Gender equality was mainstreamed into national development policies, plans and programmes. Strategies were also developed to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, and laws were amended to be in alignment with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

63. Action plans were developed to end gender-based violence. Various groups, such as religious organizations, the police and other civil society organizations, were sensitized on gender equality and gender-based violence, and social support was provided to assist victims of domestic violence.

5. Action to foster democratic participation

64. National legislation governing the election process was amended so as to be consistent with international standards for free and fair elections, and to activate civil society organizations to participate in political and public life. Activities were also implemented to educate students and the local populace about their roles, rights and responsibilities as citizens.

6. Action to advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity

65. The promotion of the arts — music, theatre, dance, visual arts — and sport was noted as an important means of favouring the social and cultural integration of disadvantaged children, preventing violence and racism, and encouraging tolerance and the rapprochement of cultures. A deeper understanding and appreciation of arts and culture, which help to inculcate the values necessary for building a culture of peace, was promoted through national cultural programmes, cultural festivals, and the publication and dissemination of cultural resources.

7. Action to support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge

66. Information and communication technology was utilized as a tool to promote a culture of peace and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals among youth, through activities such as e-peace contests, e-peace education and the creation of international youth networks. Access to information was also provided to people living in remote areas, through community radio projects, such as the UNESCO project on community radio, established in the city of Talas in the Kyrgyz Republic.

67. Activities geared towards raising public awareness on issues related to a culture of peace included itinerant exhibitions, conferences, lecture series, youth festivals, concerts, translation of the Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence into local languages, art projects, radio and television programmes and photography and sports competitions.

8. Action to promote international peace and security

68. Community-based interfaith and intercultural peace education and advocacy campaigns were launched to break down ethnic barriers, develop mutual understanding and promote a vision of long-lasting peace. The implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security was promoted through programmes and dedicated campaigns designed to promote the effective participation of local women at all levels of peace negotiations in conflict resolution and prevention, stem violence in all of its forms and combat human trafficking.

C. International non-governmental organizations

69. Ten international non-governmental organizations in operational relations with UNESCO provided contributions. A consolidated analysis of the main areas of action is provided in paragraphs 70 to 72 below.

70. Coordination among various civil society organizations was strengthened through networks developed to promote the sharing of information and best practices on issues related to the culture of peace, particularly education on peace and non-violence. An international campaign was launched to promote the adoption by States of an international declaration on the right of children to an education without violence and to education for peace and non-violence. Public awareness-raising efforts concerning the Decade were promoted through the organization of international conferences, public debates and seminars. Training programmes were developed for teachers on how to educate for a culture of peace and non-violence, and children and young people participated in programmes on peace and non-violence. Educational resources were also developed on education for peace and non-violence. At the university level, specialized departments and research programmes were developed on culture of peace issues.

71. To promote sustainable economic development, programmes were implemented which covered school fees and provided school uniforms and school materials for orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children so as to ensure their access to education. Projects provided families from poor socio-economic

backgrounds with access to medical services, appropriate living conditions and access to microcredit and support for small businesses. Assistance was provided to reunite street children with their families and to reintegrate them into society. Workshops, training and conferences were held on young people's social development needs and on their role in promoting sustainable development. Training programmes were also developed in camps for displaced people, to promote self-reliance.

72. To promote respect for human rights, training workshops were held on various human rights issues for police officers, students and civil society organizations. Networks of local non-governmental organizations were established to assist with the promotion of the rights of the child and on concrete ways to mainstream those rights into community interventions. Students and teachers were also sensitized on the importance of promoting gender equality and on measures to achieve it.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

73. The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010 was successful in bringing the concept of a "culture of peace" to all levels and segments of society and in stimulating concrete action, as demonstrated by the numerous activities that contributed to the implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace over the course of the Decade. The UNESCO public awareness campaign may have contributed to that broad awareness, as more than 75 million people worldwide signed the Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence. By signing the Manifesto 2000, drafted by a group of Nobel Peace Prize laureates in March 1999 to translate the resolutions of the General Assembly concerning a culture of peace[3] into everyday language, signatories made a pledge to promote the principles of a culture of peace and non-violence in their everyday lives. A culture of peace website was also created by UNESCO to serve as a rallying point for Decade activities and as a resource centre. Furthermore, UNESCO coordinated and implemented activities to promote the objectives of the Decade at the national, regional and global levels.

74. Apart from the relatively low level of response by Member States about their action in pursuit of a culture of peace, one of the main challenges encountered was measuring the progress of the various stakeholders in implementing action in the eight areas outlined in the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace over the course of the Decade. To address that issue, future multilateral action should focus on developing specific goals, targets, and measurable expected results, and on determining key implementing partners and beneficiaries. More attention should also be paid to harmonizing the various international years and decades so as to reduce overlap and streamline efforts. United Nations country teams should also be more proactive and involved in the pursuit of the objectives of such a significant Decade, as they are well placed to translate internationally agreed commitments into country-level action.

75. As a result of the evolution and scope of the processes of globalization, the challenges and opportunities for peacebuilding have also changed greatly since the Programme of Action was endorsed by the General Assembly in 1998. A better

[3] Resolutions 52/13, 52/15, 53/25 and 53/243.

understanding of those processes and their implications for peacebuilding is therefore needed in order to develop a more effective multilateral approach to peacebuilding in the future.

76. The next meeting of the UNESCO High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures, which will be convened by the Director-General of UNESCO at United Nations Headquarters in New York towards the end of November or in early December 2010, will provide the opportunity to reflect on that issue, as well as, at the end of the Decade and of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010), to take stock of the progress achieved and to identify new avenues and modalities for future action.

Annex

High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures

Summary of the debate held at the launch of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2010), UNESCO Headquarters, 18 February 2010

Setting the stage: the role of dialogue in a world of diversity

1. Globalization and new technologies are bringing people together in ways that were unimaginable even 20 years ago. Yet, many people feel threatened, even confused, in this new environment. Guidance on how to proceed seems missing. How can this situation be turned around? What new strategies and tangible initiatives can be developed to foster the conditions for peace? How can it be ensured that often-ignored voices — those of women, youth and marginalized groups — are heard? How can intellectuals influence public debates and bring new ideas to bear on them? How can religious leaders contribute to these public debates and to peace and stability in their societies and worldwide? How can UNESCO harness new ideas to fulfil its mandate in relevant ways? The debate about peace, culture, tolerance, mutual respect, reconciliation and equity in our societies must be reopened and the power of ideas set free so as to arrive at a peace paradigm in a globalized world.

2. Those were some of the ideas and questions raised by the Director-General of UNESCO with the members of the newly established High Panel, which met at UNESCO Headquarters on 18 February 2010. The following summary seeks to capture the main highlights of the debate. It seeks to reflect the diversity of voices heard and views expressed and does not represent an agreed consensus text.

The rapprochement of cultures: from tolerance and dialogue to peace

3. The overarching objective of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures is to identify new ways of promoting peace in the minds of men and women in a globalized world that differs greatly from that which existed at the time of the creation of the United Nations and UNESCO. A case in point is the change in the very meaning of culture over the past 60 years. It also seems that we have not yet fully come to terms with the phenomenon of globalization. There is increased interconnection and communication, and at the same time there is inertia and counter-forces which resist that process. For example, how is it that we witness large freedom of movement of capital and goods but not of people? Unfortunately, our economic development is much faster than our moral and cultural development. There are inbuilt paradoxes in globalization. Our growing interdependence and interconnectedness — the global water crisis is but one example — has not yet fully translated into genuine dialogue and shared values. On the contrary, it seems, the more economically and technologically related people are and become, the more identities seem to assert or even oppose each other. Globalization will therefore have to bring about more than a mere coexistence between cultures and religions; it will have to spawn new peace mechanisms and pathways. The mandate of UNESCO is to reduce distances, distrust and disrespect between cultures through the pursuit and development of a real practice, indeed a culture, of dialogue. A new architecture for dialogue should be based on openness, frankness and freedom, devoid of political correctness and ready to tackle sensitive issues and pursue rigorous

standards of analysis and observation. Only then can the rapprochement of cultures foster peace. The High Panel has a special responsibility in this regard.

Rapprochement of cultures through intercultural education

4. It is clear that dialogue or tolerance cannot happen if our knowledge of other cultures is limited. As stated in the Constitution of UNESCO, ignorance is one of the main causes of wars and conflicts. Indeed, ignorance is the root of all exclusiveness, intolerance and hatred. Education on aspects of other cultures and cultural realities is therefore fundamental in influencing mindsets, attitudes and perceptions, preparing for dialogue and establishing peace-prone environments. UNESCO needs to serve as a platform for this kind of sensitivity and understanding and demonstrate that, through education, awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity can be fostered. The reciprocal discovery of cultures is at the core of the mission of UNESCO. To that end, the focus must be both on curriculum design and on teacher training, which are critical components in the quest for a rapprochement of cultures. Every human being should know about his or her own culture and the diversity of cultures at large. In addition, we should learn of other cultures as they view themselves. This calls for efforts to reflect on the production of common history textbooks, with a focus on defining cultural co-heritage and drawing lines for the future. History textbooks can divide or unite peoples. Intercultural education is essential to disseminate shared values. It must be an ongoing exercise where the parties concerned learn about the meaning of coexistence in practical life. The well-entrenched approach of UNESCO to the revision of school textbooks should be pursued and even intensified with a view to removing prejudice and misinterpretations of history. The focus should be on "common history", including the history of institutions and economic achievements, as well as urban and art history across regions.

5. Since education does not happen only in the classroom, but in society at large, intercultural education should be promoted as a building block of lifelong learning. All this could be promoted through the creation of joint commissions tasked to help overcome intolerance, stereotypes and prejudice. Moreover, rapprochement and the preservation of cultural diversity can be supported by encouraging linguistic diversity — while respecting the mother tongue — at all levels of education. As mutual understanding, dialogue and rapprochement of cultures cannot be imposed from the outside, it is an education for peace and an education that instils peace which can yield strategic possibilities not only for tolerant co-existence, but for peaceful living together. For their part, business leaders have an increasing role to play in strengthening world peace and in initiating tangible solidarity action among peoples and communities.

The human rights dimension of the rapprochement of cultures

6. The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative and inseparable from respect for human dignity. Human rights and respect for individual dignity represent a set of universal shared values that should be acknowledged as the basis for the rapprochement of cultures. With injustice described as a ferment of conflict, human rights-inspired good governance is key to addressing cultural or religious intolerance and social and economic inequalities, especially in the context of a global crisis. This has important implications with respect to the cultural rights of minorities and oppressed cultures, which cannot fully be materialized if cultural

diversity does not translate into cultural pluralism at all levels and in all segments of societies. It is also reflected in the tension around immigration debates, especially in Europe, which are marked by diversity (which is not a given) but not necessarily by pluralism (which, as a recognition of diversity, is an achievement).

7. Excessive focus on national identities, regional cultures or transnational religions and constellations such as "Islam and the West" lead to the silencing of less visible cultures and minority voices which might otherwise nuance ongoing dialogues. What is more, in an interconnected world, tensions around debates in one place may today have instant conflict effects in another. Such conflicts also often arise because of the absence of dialogue within a given community or society. Monolithic tendencies should be curbed; implicit in the notion of rapprochement is the need for cultures and religions to evolve towards permanent dialogue with each other. Because democracy sometimes has to be a frank dialogue between different philosophical, religious and intellectual perspectives, the public space should remain neutral, open and pluralist.

8. Freedom of expression is seen as a key ingredient of the culture of peace and a precondition for reconciliation. Over the course of history, it has always seemed hard in the aftermath of humankind's darkest chapters to believe that there would be better times. Yet, time has shown that problems and conflicts can be solved, making harmonious living together possible. Confidence in human development is therefore a crucial part of the process of rapprochement.

Towards a culture of open intercultural and interreligious dialogue

9. Cultures or religions are not in themselves causes of war or conflict, even if they have often been used as a pretext to stir up conflict. In many cases, conflict tends to break out when dialogue becomes impossible or stops, and conflict can often be mitigated or prevented when dialogue starts. A culture of intercultural dialogue can thus pave the way for a culture of peace.

10. Overall, the role of religion in public and societal life needs to be acknowledged to a greater extent by politicians and religious leaders alike. Religion can be the basis for peaceful co-existence, just as it can be used as an excuse for anti-humanistic conduct.

11. However, dialogue has to rest on mutual tolerance so that divergences and convergences can be openly discussed. To concretize a culture of peace and also curb the destructive force of terrorism, intercultural and interreligious dialogue should become a permanent exercise at the local, national, regional and international levels and involve every segment of society. UNESCO should strengthen its engagement, while connecting with ongoing initiatives, in creating platforms for interreligious dialogue, and convince Governments to establish such permanent frameworks for ongoing intercultural and interreligious dialogue, especially at the national level. In the pursuit of that goal, the media will be essential in fostering the rapprochement of cultures towards peace. There is a lack of peace journalism around the world. A new language for the media should be identified through the analysis of the very conceptualization of power, as pluralism and cultural diversity are the hallmarks of freedom of expression. The driving force behind this should be the search for commonalities to mobilize for reconciliation and peace.

Two key actors and constituencies: women and youth

12. Societies are evolving all the time. The constant evolution of conditions and of priorities for action pose particular challenges for multilateralism. Women and youth are strategic points of entry. They are pivotal groups that hold the key for making a peaceful future through intercultural dialogue a reality. Their involvement must be prioritized in future endeavours. Societies develop best when women and youth are enabled to contribute fully as members of their community. The socially constructed roles that still thwart the potential and actual contribution of women, youth and marginalized groups must be overcome.

13. The status of women should be strengthened by each culture, building on its specificities. Gender equality is a universal fundamental right and the most humanist dimension and task of the 21st century. It is a necessary condition for the achievement of intercultural dialogue, social cohesion and the pursuit of peace. It must be recognized across the world as a common value and the dignity of women should be respected everywhere. Specific measures for the advancement of women need to be initiated and maintained. To obtain dialogue and reconciliation, it is indispensable to let women play their role in all domains of decision-making, including in diplomacy and business corporations. To combat prejudice, education should imbue renewed visions of gender equality and the positive roles of women everywhere and in all walks of society. Violence against women and girls around the world is based on cultural values ("sexism"). At the same time, cultural diversity can never be heralded if it were to lead to a denial of the human rights of women. Peace cannot be built if this challenge is not addressed in every aspect of education.

14. If the rapprochement of cultures is to become a mainstream aspect of our societies, young people must be fully involved, engaged and acquainted with the diversity of cultures and the fruit of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. This is all the more necessary as the current generation has failed the successor generations in many areas. Youth should be empowered to participate much more directly in public debates, especially on issues that concern them. Children around the world who have been victimized should be prioritized. A highly relevant platform for dialogue could engage youth on the universality of human rights and the incorporation of norms and structures of societies into the respective education curricula.

15. The commitment that UNESCO embodies is synonymous with the kind of unshakable confidence in the possibility of human improvement through dialogue, interaction and education at all levels demonstrated in the debate of the High Panel.

List of participants in the High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among Cultures

Kjell Magne Bondevik (Norway), former Prime Minister of Norway

Lydia Cacho (Mexico), journalist

Mustafa Ceric (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Grand Imam of Zagreb (Croatia)

May Chidiac (Lebanon), journalist

Souleymane Cissé (Mali), film-maker

Esther Coopersmith (United States of America), UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Intercultural Dialogue

Vigdis Finnbogadóttir (Iceland), former President of Iceland

Francesco Follo (Vatican), Permanent Observer of the Holy See to UNESCO and the Latin Union

Mohamed "Mo" Ibrahim (Sudan), entrepreneur; founder and former Chief Executive Officer of Celtel International

Attiya Inayatullah (Pakistan), member of the Pakistan National Assembly

Julia Kristeva (France), Professor at the Institut Universitaire de France

Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière (France), Chief Executive Officer of Financière Marc de Lacharrière

Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Archbishop of Kinshasa

Ilber Ortayli (Turkey), President of the Topkapi Palace Museum

Tavivat Puntarigvivat (Thailand), Director, Institute of Research and Development, World Buddhist University in Bangkok

Hegumen Philip Riabykh (Russian Federation), Vice-Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate

Yazid Sabeg (France), French Commissioner for Diversity and Equal Opportunities; UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador

Wole Soyinka (Nigeria), Nobel Laureate for Literature in 1986

Simone Veil (France), former Minister and President of the European Parliament